CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Rural business development
Learning Territory - Associativity and organizational networks to promote inclusion

November 13 to 19, 2016 Nariño, Colombia
On the impetuous southern Colombian Andes there is the department of Nariño, where rural microentrepreneurs have **bet on associativity** as a successful strategy for **economic development and social inclusion**, becoming facilitators of local and regional progress.
The experiences of these associations present an accumulated knowledge about the associative development, which is reflected in the **construction and consolidation of organizational networks**, through which they improved their participation in value chains for sectors related to their products and services offers (coffee, brown sugar, textiles, etc.). Thus, these networks allow **joint action of microenterprises** to articulate in the market and improve their competitive advantages, overcoming restrictions usually associated with limited ability to increase their production volumes and **quality standards compliance**. So, networking have increased negotiating power and have even favored the recognition of the microentrepreneurial character of rural associativity to establish **fair market conditions**.

This initiative, called **Rural Micro Enterprise Associative System (SAMER)**, has been driven by **108 micro-enterprise initiatives**, organized in **9 networks**, which are being supported by the International Centre for Cleaner Production (LOPE) from the **Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje - SENA Regional Nariño**. Because of its success, this initiative has been structured in a Learning Territory, which identifies concrete and effective solutions that help microenterprises to connect in a more sustainable way with product markets.

**Learning Territory implemented in 3 complete training sessions**

**In 6 months, 57 people** have been trained in this new Learning Territory

**15 local champions** have strengthened their capabilities and participated as Learning Territories trainers

**30,000 USD** income from services providing to Learning Territories program

**108 rural microenterprises**, articulated in **9 organizational networks**

Networks have generated **1000 jobs** and annual sales for **800,000 USD**
What successful solutions have the Learning Territory’s Organizational Networks implemented?

**Fashion, Apparel and Accessories Organizational Network of Nariño (Case: Manos Unidas Association)**

Comprised of 12 rural microenterprises dedicated to the transformation of textiles, it allows members to successfully face their products marketing and trading processes. The Manos Unidas Association, located in the municipality of Consacá, is dedicated to making uniforms and is one of those companies. It was selected to be part of the Territory due to the success of its **associativity efforts**, which has been reflected in increased levels of **quality and competitiveness of its products**. This has allowed it to sign contracts with industrial companies in the region, improve **business sustainability** and increase the income of its members.

- **Network conformed by 12 rural microenterprises**
- **Manos Unidas** has successfully participated in several **fashion shows and business meetings**, while establishing important contracts with companies in the region.
## Specialty Coffee Organizational Network of Nariño (Case: Nuragro Coffee Association)

Counting with **10 rural microenterprises producing specialty coffee and high quality coffee**, this organizational network has achieved the establishment of **public-private partnerships**, through which it has commercially linked with national and international companies, buyers of this type of coffee. The Nuragro Coffe Association, located in the municipality of San Lorenzo, is part of the network and represents it in the Learning Territory, as its trajectory evidences a **development process** in which **seeking differentiation and added value on its products** has always prevailed through recovery and implementation of pollution free and environmentally friendly **traditional farming practices**.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Network conformed by 10 rural microenterprises, has achieved to commercially link with 8 US companies</th>
<th>Nuragro coffee commercializes more than 3,000 kilos of special coffee annually</th>
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</thead>
</table>

## Powdered Panela and Derivatives Organizational Network (Case: 20 de Julio Association)

Consisting on **7 panelera cane and powdered panela** (derived from sugar cane) **producing microenterprises**, this organizational network has opened many local market niches, where it sells its products. The **20 de Julio Association**, through an important business partnership process and the resource management support from various institutions, has managed to implement a **community mill for processing raw material**. Thanks to this infrastructure, it has created a real opportunity to generate income for the community.

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<th>Network conformed by 7 rural microenterprises</th>
<th>The 20 de Julio Association monthly produces 40 tons of panela, generating direct employment to 34 families, and indirectly to 72</th>
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From the various activities implemented in this Learning Territory and the direct contact with those who have led the different experiences that shaped it, attendees will acquire new learning that will enable them to:

✓ **Implement rural business plans**, based on microenterprise local networks
✓ **Develop supply networks strategies**, for creating business fabric
✓ **Implement value adding and product differentiation plans**, to strengthen market linkage
✓ **Develop access strategies** to public procurement market and agribusiness contracts
✓ **Establish partnerships with public and private stakeholders** that support the development of rural microenterprises

**How much does it cost to participate?**

Individual participation costs **USD 1,150** (One thousand, one hundred and fifty American Dollars) and covers all the Learning Territory participation expenses, including:

- Accommodation, meals and local transportation in places where the activities will be realized
- Permanent technical and operational assistance to participants
- Local Champions and coordination Fees
- Travel insurance for non-resident participants in Colombia
- Teaching materials
- Certification Diploma

Tuition fee does **NOT include airfare to and from the city of Pasto (Colombia)**, the Learning Territory starting point. This service must be paid for by each participant.

**How to apply?**

Complete the **application form on line** or download, fill and submit the **application form on Word format** to the email address **territoriosdeaprendizaje@procasur.org** no later than **October 24, 2016**

For more details please download the **LT Official Program** and contact us
Karen Rees Holland: **krees@procasur.org** and **territoriosdeaprendizaje@procasur.org**

Feel free to share this information with other potential applicants
Learning Territories
A knowledge management experience from Local Champions

Learning Territories is a program that promotes sustainable development of local capacities to promote the scaling-up of innovations from the knowledge management of producers, families, communities and rural associations. Territories are fostered by PROCASUR Corporation, with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Ford Foundation. They are seeking to value knowledge and good practices assets accumulated by Local Champions, men and women, who have implemented innovative and successful solutions in various areas of rural development.

From the identification of rural areas rich in knowledge assets, the program invests in pedagogically promoting and organizing lessons learned by Local Champions, building training proposals deeply rooted in the field with useful solutions for other public and private rural development investment operators.

Thus, this innovative local knowledge management model, provides continuous training, ran by its own local champions, under peer learning methodologies, focusing on knowledge transfer, experiences exchange and theoretical and practical learning with strong emphasis on practical applicability.